

NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 1-0042
NYOKA WHITE

JANUARY 27, 1976

THE U.N. AND NAMIBIA

ANNCR:

1975 WAS A YEAR OF INDEPENDENCE FOR AFRICA. THE PORTUGUESE TERRITORIES -- ANGOLA, MOZAMBIQUE, GUINEA BISSAU, CAPE VERDE, SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE ALL BECAME INDEPENDENT. THE FRENCH ANNOUNCED THEY WOULD GIVE UP THE COMORO ISLANDS AND THE TERRITORY OF THE AFARS AND ISSAS. GREAT BRITAIN SAYS THE SEYCHELLES WILL BE GIVEN INDEPENDENCE, AND THE SPANISH HAVE PULLED OUT OF THE SPANISH SAHARA. NAMIBIA AND RHODESIA REMAIN AS PECULIAR PROBLEMS OF INDEPENDENCE IN AFRICA. THE U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL MEETS THIS WEEK TO TAKE UP BOTH PROBLEMS. VOA'S NYOKA WHITE HAS PREPARED THIS BACKGROUND REPORT ON THE NAMIBIA SITUATION.

VOICE:

THE SECURITY COUNCIL IS TRYING AGAIN TO DETERMINE WHAT CAN BE DONE TO FORCE SOUTH AFRICA TO RELINQUISH CONTROL OVER THE TERRITORY KNOWN AS NAMIBIA OR SOUTHWEST AFRICA. THE TASK IS NOT EASY. SOUTH AFRICA RECEIVED THE GERMAN COLONY UNDER A LEAGUE OF NATIONS MANDATE FOLLOWING THE GERMAN DEFEAT IN WORLD WAR ONE. THE U.N. BEGAN IN THE 1950'S TO TRY AND REMOVE SOUTH AFRICA FROM THE TERRITORY, BUT SOUTH AFRICA HAS STEADFASTLY IGNORED AND REFUSED TO COMPLY WITH INTERNATIONAL ORDERS FOR IT TO GET OUT.

(OPT) IT REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE TRANSFER OF THE MANDATES POWER FROM THE DEFUNCT LEAGUE OF NATIONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS. IT HAS REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE THE AUTHORITY OF A

UNITED NATIONS COUNCIL SET UP TO DIRECT NAMIBIAN AFFAIRS. IT HAS IGNORED A U.N. RULING THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S PRESENCE IN NAMIBIA IS ILLEGAL. IT REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE THE U.N.'S CHANGE OF THE NAME FROM SOUTHWEST AFRICA TO NAMIBIA. IT IGNORED A 1971 INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE RULING THAT ITS CONTROL OF NAMIBIA IS ILLEGAL. IN DECEMBER 1974, THE SECURITY COUNCIL ORDERED SOUTH AFRICA TO GET OUT OF NAMIBIA WITHIN SIX MONTHS. THE MAY 1975 DEADLINE CAME AND WENT AND SOUTH AFRICA HAS REMAINED. (END OPT)

WHAT BASICALLY IS THE QUARREL THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS WITH SOUTH AFRICA OVER THE AREA? ASIDE FROM THE FACT THAT MOST U.N. MEMBERS FEEL IT IS LONG PAST TIME FOR NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FEELS THAT SOUTH AFRICA GROSSLY VIOLATED ITS ORIGINAL MANDATE. UNDER ITS TERMS, SOUTH AFRICA WAS CHARGED WITH "PROMOTING TO THE UTMOST, THE MATERIAL AND MORAL WELL-BEING AND SOCIAL PROGRESS OF THE INHABITANTS."

(OPT) INSTEAD, SOUTH AFRICA HAS USED NAMIBIA AS A TREASURE-HOUSE, NOT ONLY OF CHEAP BLACK LABOR, BUT ALSO OF THE TERRITORY'S RICH MINERAL RESOURCES. THE AREA -- ABOUT THE SIZE OF ENGLAND AND FRANCE PUT TOGETHER -- IS SPARSELY POPULATED, BUT IT CONTAINS LARGE AMOUNTS OF EXPLOITABLE DIAMONDS, TIN, ZINC, LEAD, COPPER, OIL AND URANIUM. (END OPT)

SOUTH AFRICA HAS SAID IT WILL ALLOW SELF-RULE FOR NAMIBIA, BUT WHAT IT MEANS BY SELF-RULE AND WHAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MEANS BY SELF-RULE ARE WORLD'S APART. THE MAJORITY AT THE UNITED NATIONS WANTS IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE FOR A UNIFIED NAMIBIA ON A ONE-MAN, ONE-VOTE MULTI-RACIAL BASIS. SOUTH AFRICA

WANTS TO FRAGMENT THE COUNTRY INTO NOMINALLY-SELF-GOVERNING ETHNIC HOMELANDS -- SOMETHING AKIN TO SOUTH AFRICA'S OWN SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT PLAN. SOUTH AFRICA ARGUES THAT EACH POPULATION GROUP IN THE TERRITORY HAS A RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION.

THE CATCH WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN SYSTEM IS THAT A COUNTRY DIVIDED INTO TERRITORIAL HOMELANDS WILL PROBABLY LEAVE THE BEST LAND AND THE BEST MINERALS IN THE HANDS OF WHITES -- THE SAME AS THE SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF.

THIS BACKGROUND THEN IS WHAT FACES THE SECURITY COUNCIL AS IT MEETS THIS WEEK ON NAMIBIA. WHAT CAN THE COUNCIL DO? THERE HAVE BEEN VARIOUS PROPOSALS CIRCULATING AT THE UNITED NATIONS THIS PAST WEEK TO DECLARE THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESENCE IN NAMIBIA A THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE. THIS IS A CRUCIAL POINT. THE U.N. CHARTER SAYS A SITUATION MUST BE DECLARED A THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE BEFORE THE U.N. CAN TAKE OTHER MEASURES. IN THIS CASE, MEASURES COULD INCLUDE IMPOSING SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA, OR EXPELLING IT FROM THE UNITED NATIONS.

IN SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON NAMIBIA LAST JUNE, A RESOLUTION TO IMPOST SANCTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA WAS DEFEATED BY A TRIPLE VETO FROM THE UNITED STATES, FRANCE AND BRITAIN, ON THE GROUNDS THAT SANCTIONS WOULD BE UNENFORCEABLE AND MIGHT IN FACT HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON SOUTH AFRICA'S BLACK POPULATION. IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT ANOTHER SANCTIONS VOTE WOULD SURVIVE A VETO IN THIS WEEK'S DEBATE. ANOTHER RESOLUTION ORDERING SOUTH AFRICA OUT OF NAMIBIA WOULD LIKELY MEET THE SAME FATE AS PREVIOUS SUCH RESOLUTIONS -- SOUTH AFRICAN REFUSAL TO COMPLY.

WHAT OPTIONS THEN ARE OPEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS? SEAN MCBRIDE, A NOBEL PRIZE WINNER, WHO HEADS THE U.N. COUNCIL ON NAMIBIA, PREDICTS CONFIDENTLY THAT NAMIBIA WILL HAVE SELF-RULE UNDER UNITED NATIONS TERMS WITHIN TWO TO THREE YEARS. HE SAYS THE UNITED NATIONS IS TRAINING NAMIBIANS TO TAKE OVER THE GOVERNMENT AT A NEW INSTITUTE FOR NAMIBIA, WITH TEMPORARY HEADQUARTERS IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA.

COMMISSIONER MCBRIDE ALSO HAS HOPES FOR A DECREE ISSUED LAST YEAR FOR THE PROTECTION OF NAMIBIA'S NATURAL RESOURCES. THE DECREE GIVES THE U.N. AUTHORITY TO HAVE SHIPMENTS OF NATURAL RESOURCES FROM NAMIBIA SEIZED AND IMPOUNDED ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE PROPERTY HAS BEEN ILLEGALLY TAKEN FROM THE PEOPLE OF NAMIBIA. MR. MCBRIDE SAID HE HAS BEEN MEETING WITH EUROPEAN LEADERS TO GET THEM TO HELP THE U.N. ENFORCE THE DECREE.

MR. MCBRIDE SAYS HE HOPES NAMIBIAN SELF-RULE WILL COME PEACEFULLY, BUT IF NOT, HE SAYS IT WILL COME ANYWAY -- THE SAME WAY THAT ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE ACHIEVED INDEPENDENCE -- THROUGH A WAR OF OF LIBERATION OF NAMIBIAN BLACK NATIONALISTS.

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